DARK MOON RISING

BATMAN®

and the MAD MONK

2
NOV
2006

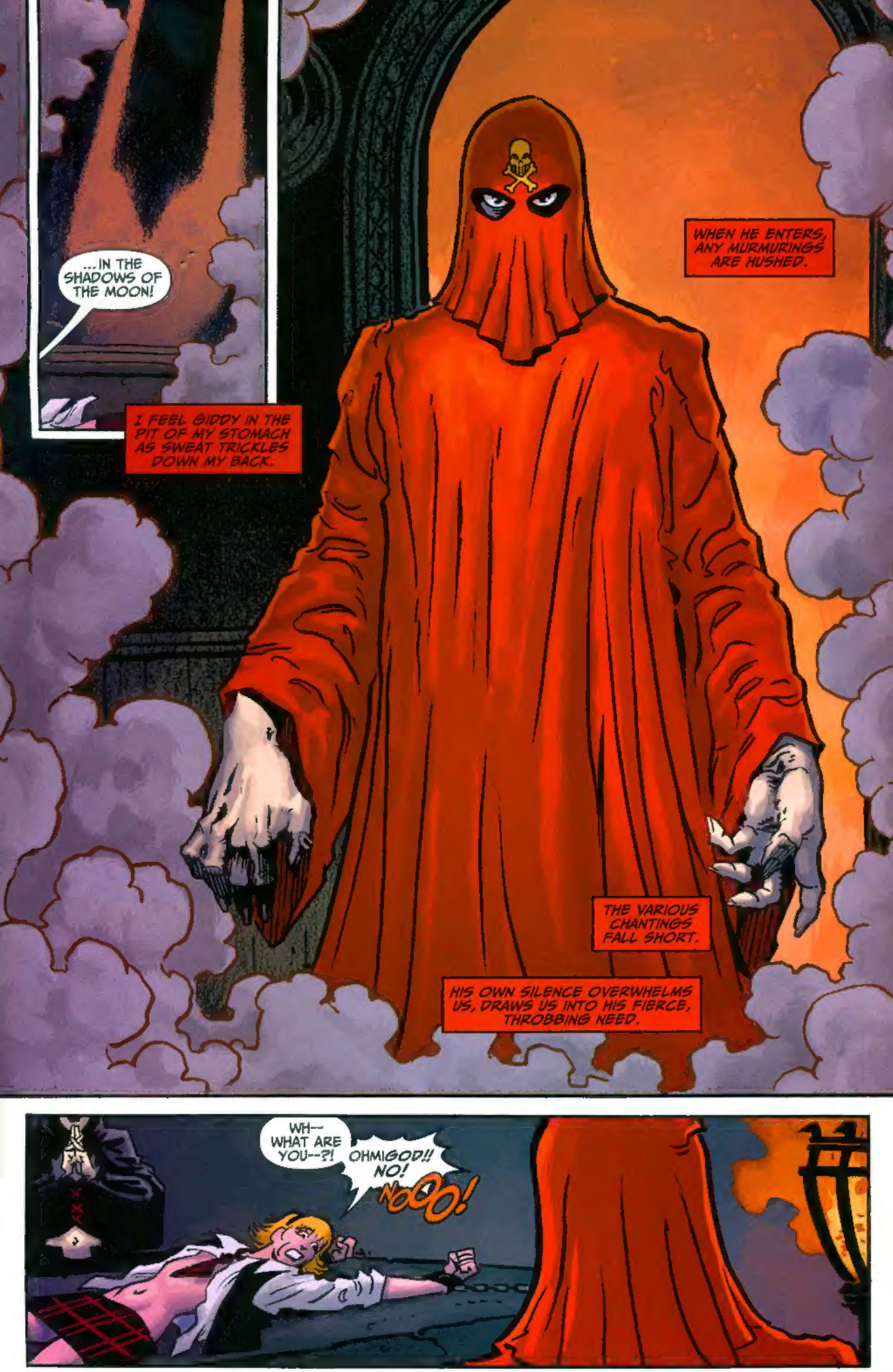
MATT WAGNER

DIRECT SALES
$3.50 US $4.75 CAN
00211

THE BROTHERHOOD HAS GATHERED FOR THE BLOOD COMMUNION.
ETERNAL NIGHT, HEED THE PETITION OF THOSE WHO WELCOME YOUR COLD AND DARK EMBRACE.
THE AIR IS RIFE WITH CRAVING AND EXPECTATION.
MATT WAGNER
·STORY & ART·
DAVE STEWART
·COLORS·
ROB LEIGH
·LETTERS·
BRANDON MONTCLARE
·ASST. EDITOR·
BOB SCHRECK
·EDITOR·
BATMAN CREATED BY
BOB KANE

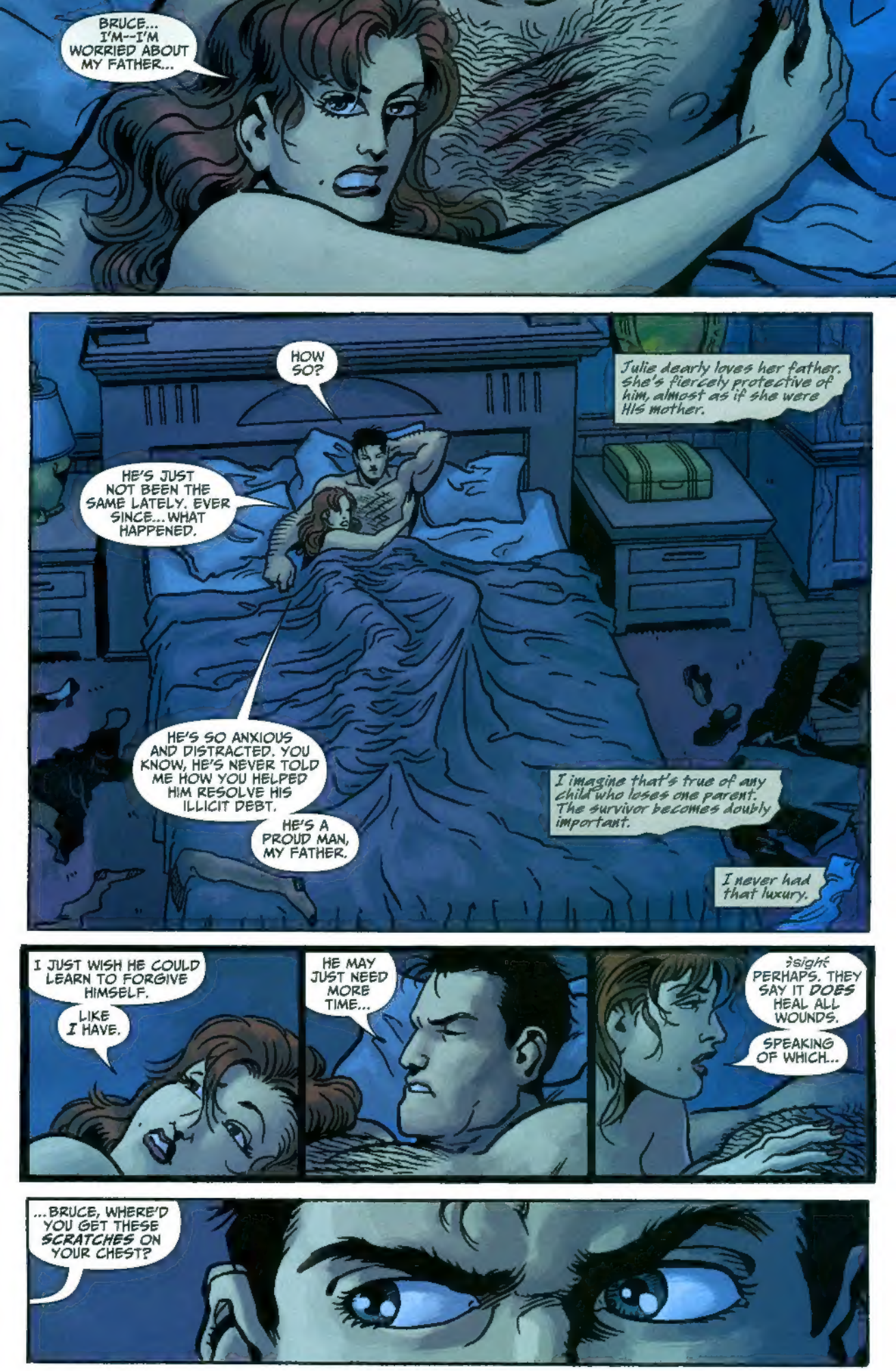
AGAIN, THE LURE OF FULFILLMENT ENTHRALLS US.
WE WHO KNEEL AT THIS SACRIFICIAL ALTAR ACKNOWLEDGE THE POWER OF CONSUMPTION.
IT IS NATURAL TO INGEST LIFE! IT IS NATURAL TO LUST FOR ETERNITY!
IT IS NATURAL FOR THE HUNTERS TO SLAKE THESE THIRSTS ON THEIR PREY!
THE PROMISE OF IMMORTALITY DANGLES WITHIN OUR GRASP.
W-WHA--? WH-WHERE... WHERE AM I?!

OH, SACRED NIGHT, SEND YOUR BLESSINGS TO THIS INFERNAL CONGREGATION.
AND, THROUGH THIS BLOOD THAT WE SHED, GRANT US YOUR NEVER-ENDING BLISS!
WHAT...? WHAT THE HELL *IS* THIS?!
WHERE THE HELL...?! WHERE THE HELL *AM* I?!
OHMIGOD!! *OHMIGOD!!* WHAT ARE YOU--?!
NICCOLA! ALWAYS KNOWS BEST.
LET ME-- LET ME *GO!* *HELLLLP!*
SOMEBODY-- ANYBODY-- PLEASE-- HELLLLP ME!!
THE TIMING IS PERFECT.
ALL THIS, WE ASK...
OH, SWEET *JESUS!!*
HELLP!
...AS WE WERE TAUGHT BY YOUR HONORED DISCIPLE, HE WHO WALKS...
THEY ALWAYS AWAKEN JUST AS THE CEREMONY BEGINS.
THE SCREAMING ONLY SERVES TO HEIGHTEN OUR FERVOR.


...IN THE SHADOWS OF THE MOON!
I FEEL GIDDY IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH AS SWEAT TRICKLES DOWN MY BACK.
WHEN HE ENTERS, ANY MURMURINGS ARE HUSHED.
THE VARIOUS CHANTINGS FALL SHORT.
HIS OWN SILENCE OVERWHELMS US, DRAWS US INTO HIS FIERCE, THROBBING NEED.
WH-- WHAT ARE YOU--?!
OHMIGOD!! NO!
NOOO!

NO! ARE YOU--?
--ARE YOU PEOPLE INSANE?!
SOMEBODY HELP MEEee--
UNnhhhhh...
HER FLESH GLISTENS LIKE PORCELAIN.
A COLD WIND WHISTLES ALL AROUND US.
KCNCH--
CHRGT--
RKCH--
RKCH--
RKCH--
SCHLLLP
SSSSSSK-SSSSSK
GLGGH
SSSSSSK-GLGGH
Mmmm--
YESSSSSS--

ALL OF YOU...
ALL WHO WOULD KNOW THE NIGHT'S INFINITE RAPTURE, COME FORWARD!
THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE SPILLS ITS HEADY ELIXIR FOR YOU.
THIS IS THE WATER OF PERPETUITY!
LET ANY WHO WOULD JOIN THE RANKS OF THE DEATHLESS SAVOR ITS SUSTAINING FLOW!
AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT...
...SHALL FULFILL ITS DESTINY!
NICCOLAI HAS PROMISED THAT, SOME DAY, ALL OF US WILL BE THE SAME AS HE.
FOREVER FEARLESS, VORACIOUS AND YOUNG.


BRUCE... I'M--I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY FATHER...
HOW SO?
HE'S JUST NOT BEEN THE SAME LATELY. EVER SINCE... WHAT HAPPENED.
HE'S SO ANXIOUS AND DISTRACTED. YOU KNOW, HE'S NEVER TOLD ME HOW YOU HELPED HIM RESOLVE HIS ILLICIT DEBT.
HE'S A PROUD MAN, MY FATHER.
Julie dearly loves her father. She's fiercely protective of him, almost as if she were HIS mother.
I imagine that's true of any child who loses one parent. The survivor becomes doubly important.
I never had that luxury.
I JUST WISH HE COULD LEARN TO FORGIVE HIMSELF.
LIKE I HAVE.
HE MAY JUST NEED MORE TIME...
sigh
PERHAPS. THEY SAY IT DOES HEAL ALL WOUNDS.
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
...BRUCE, WHERE'D YOU GET THESE SCRATCHES ON YOUR CHEST?

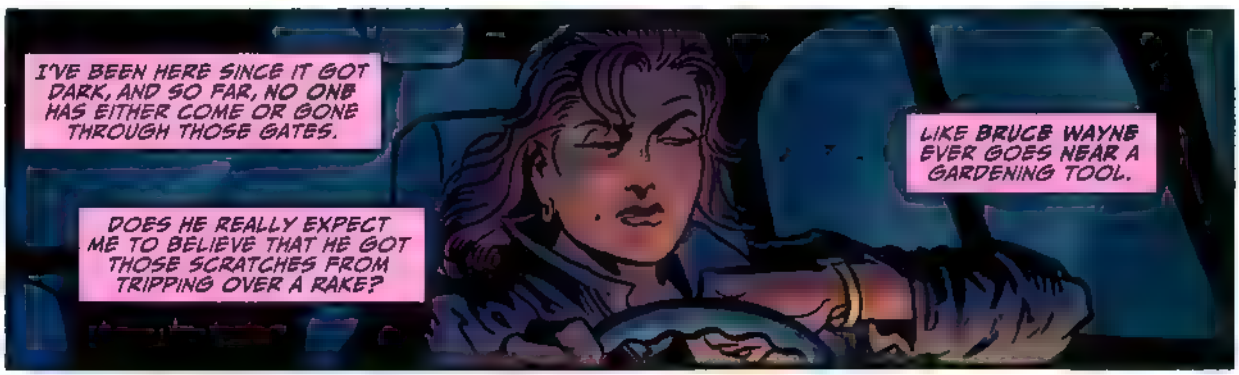
I'LL SAY THIS FOR YOU, MADISON...
YOU ARE ONE PERSISTENT PAIN-IN-THE-ASS!
YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME SO BADLY?
SO TALK!!
I HAD... um--
I HAD HOPED THAT WE COULD HAVE A PRIVATE CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS OUR... OUTSTANDING BUSINESS, MARONI.
NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAMS HAD I EVER IMAGINED WALKING INTO THE OFFICES OF A CHEAP THUG LIKE SAL MARONI.
BUT THEN... I HAVE DONE MANY THINGS I'D HAVE NEVER IMAGINED, OF LATE.
FORGET IT, NORMAN. IN CASE YOU AIN'T NOTICED, WE GOT A WHOLE NEW CREW AROUND HERE. WHOLE NEW CREW.
YOU WANTED A POWWOW AND YOU GOT IT, BUT ON MY TERMS. NOW STOP WASTIN' MY TIME!
WELL, IT'S JUST... THAT IS, I HADN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN SOME TIME. SINCE THE...
SINCE WHAT HAPPENED AT THAT COUNTRY ESTATE--

EASE UP ON THAT SCRATCH, PAL. WE DON'T *TALK* ABOUT THAT INCIDENT AROUND HERE. TOO MANY *"BAD FEELINGS,"* Y'KNOW?
LET'S JUST SAY... YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK.
BUT, SAL... I AM A MAN OF MY WORD AND I INTEND TO HONOR THAT.
I STILL OWE YOU THE BETTER PART OF THREE MILLION DOLLARS--
CHRIST, AND COULDN'T I *USE* IT? COST ME NEARLY HALF THAT JUST TO SQUARE THINGS WITH THE *ROMAN!*
DAMN IT, I'M LUCKY TO STILL BE WALKIN'...
WELL, LIKE I SAID, I *INTEND* TO PAY YOU B--
I GUESS YOU DON'T HEAR SO WELL. I SAID YOU AND I ARE *THROUGH!* CAPISCE?!
BOYS.
BUT I... I--
YOU OWE ME *NOTHING,* MADISON! UNDERSTAND?
AND TELL YOUR "FRIEND" THAT *I* LIVED UP TO *MY* PART OF THE BARGAIN!
BUT WHY--?
WHAT FRIEND?!
Y-YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *HIM,* AREN'T YOU?
MARONI, I *SWEAR* TO YOU! I HAVE *NOTHING* TO DO WITH *BATM--*
SHOVE OFF, MADISON! IN CASE YOU AIN'T HEARD--
"--WE DON'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THAT AROUND HERE, EITHER!"

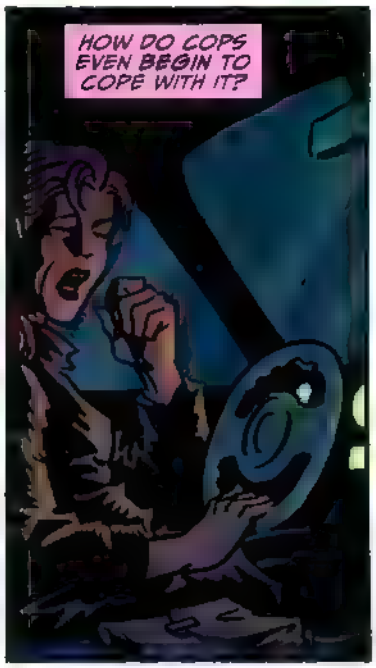
I've often wondered how I knew that Harvey Dent would be sympathetic to my cause.
THANKS FOR GETTING ME THESE REPORTS, VALERIE. YOU CAN LEAVE THE REST 'TIL THE MORNING.
I'VE STILL GOT SOME WORK I WANT TO FINISH UP.
HARVEY DENT
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NOW WHAT? CITY FORGET TO PAY ITS BILL?
CLK CLK CLK
COME IN. AND SHUT THE DOOR.
KLK
AH. SHOULDA KNOWN...
YOUR PAL, GORDON, WAS HERE THE OTHER DAY. STILL TRYING TO GET A SUBPOENA TO SEARCH FALCONE'S COUNTRY HOUSE.
WHAT WENT ON OUT THERE?
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU.

There is a real dichotomy in Harvey. Part of him is bound by the rule of law..
BELIEVE ME, IF IT WAS WITHIN MY POWER, I'D BUST DOWN HIS FRONT DOOR AND HAUL HIM OUT IN CHAINS MYSELF!
WELL, UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S STILL NO JUDGE IN ALL OF GOTHAM WHO'LL CRACK "THE ROMAN'S" WHIP.
...while the other half smolders for justice. In that sense, we understand each other.
ACTUALLY, THAT'S WHY I'VE COME. FALCONE HAS RECENTLY MISPLACED A HUGE SHIPMENT OF HEROIN.
OR, I SHOULD SAY, HIS MAIN CAPO--SAL MARONI.
YEAH, I'D HEARD RUMORS THAT OL' SAL WAS HAVING TROUBLES. I'D LOVE TO DANCE AT THAT GUY'S ARRAIGNMENT!
HIS MAIN TROUBLE IS ME.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO LOCATE THAT DOPE BEFORE THEY DO.
WELL, IF YOU CAN CONNECT MARONI TO SUCH A DEAL, WE COULD PUT HIM AWAY FOR A LOOOONG TIME.
PROBABLY GET HIM TO SQUEAL LIKE A RAT, AS WELL.
I'LL DO MY BEST.

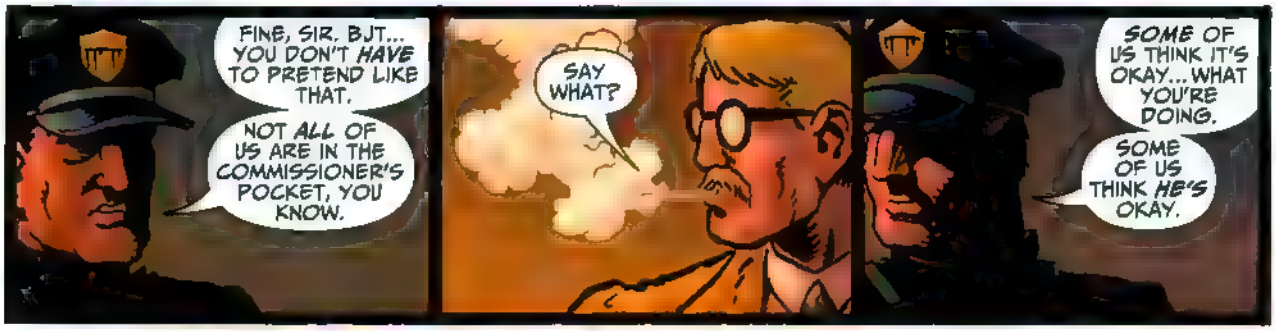
FROM THE BACK SEAT OF THE ROLLS...
...YOU NEVER GET A GOOD IDEA OF EXACTLY HOW BIG THOSE GATES REALLY ARE.
BRUCE SAID HE HAD MORE "BUSINESS" TO ATTEND TO TONIGHT.


I'VE BEEN HERE SINCE IT GOT DARK, AND SO FAR, NO ONE HAS EITHER COME OR GONE THROUGH THOSE GATES.
LIKE BRUCE WAYNE EVER GOES NEAR A GARDENING TOOL.
DOES HE REALLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT HE GOT THOSE SCRATCHES FROM TRIPPING OVER A RAKE?

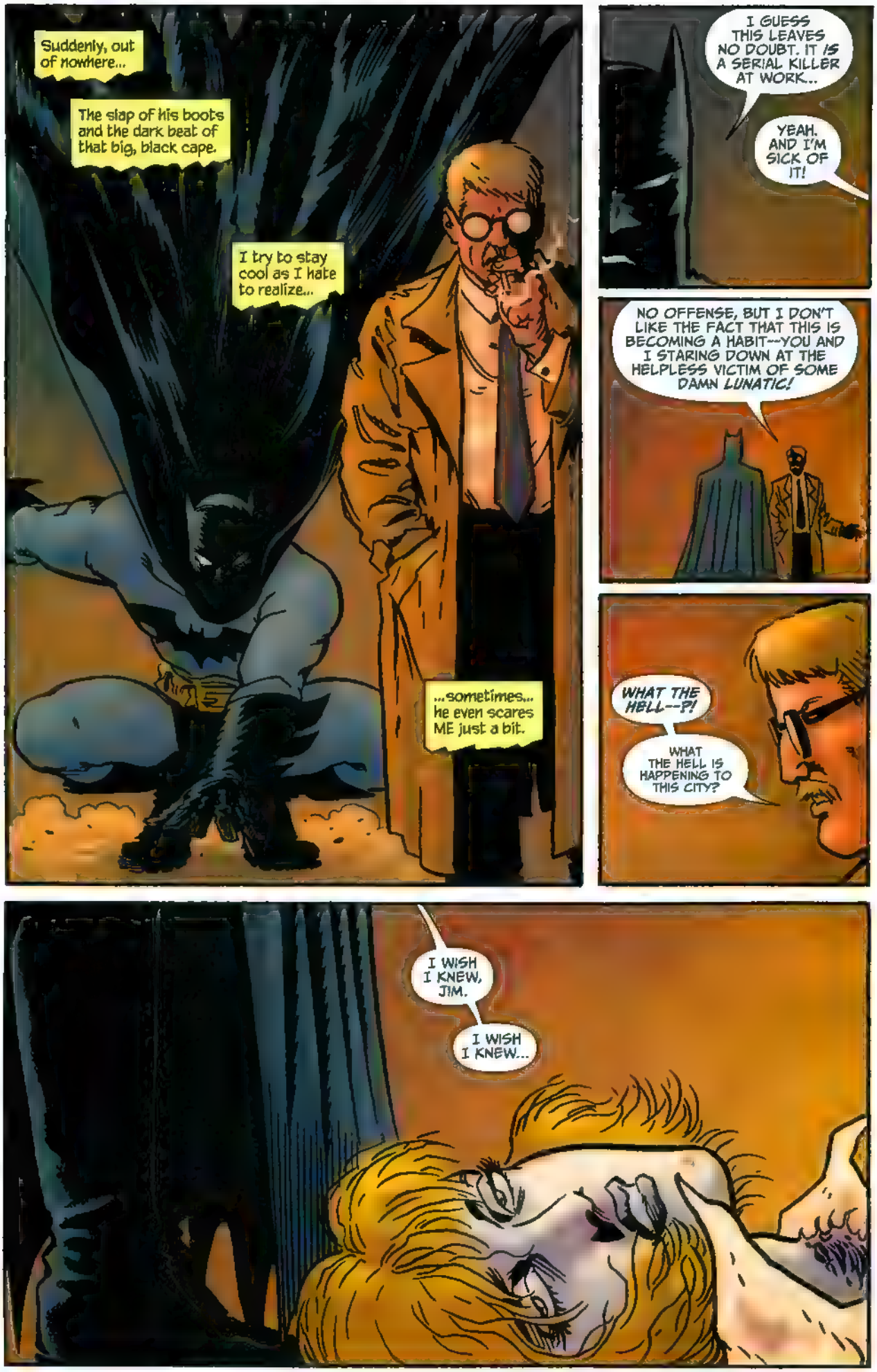
LISTEN TO ME...
...THIS IS TEXTBOOK PARANOIA...
...AND, MY GOD, THIS "STAKEOUT" STUFF IS BORING!


HOW DO COPS EVEN BEGIN TO COPE WITH IT?

BRYSON, MAKE SURE THAT ALLEYWAY'S BLOCKED OFF!
What the hell is wrong with this city?
Another one.
Another body--abused and discarded. This one was found inside a common trash dumpster.
REYNOLDS, WHY DON'T YOU AND EVANS GO HELP SECURE THAT BORDER?
GIVE ME JUST A FEW MINUTES ALONE HERE BEFORE WE CALL IN FORENSICS.


FINE, SIR. BJT... YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO PRETEND LIKE THAT.
NOT *ALL* OF US ARE IN THE COMMISSIONER'S POCKET, YOU KNOW.
SAY WHAT?
SOME OF US THINK IT'S OKAY... WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
SOME OF US THINK *HE'S* OKAY.

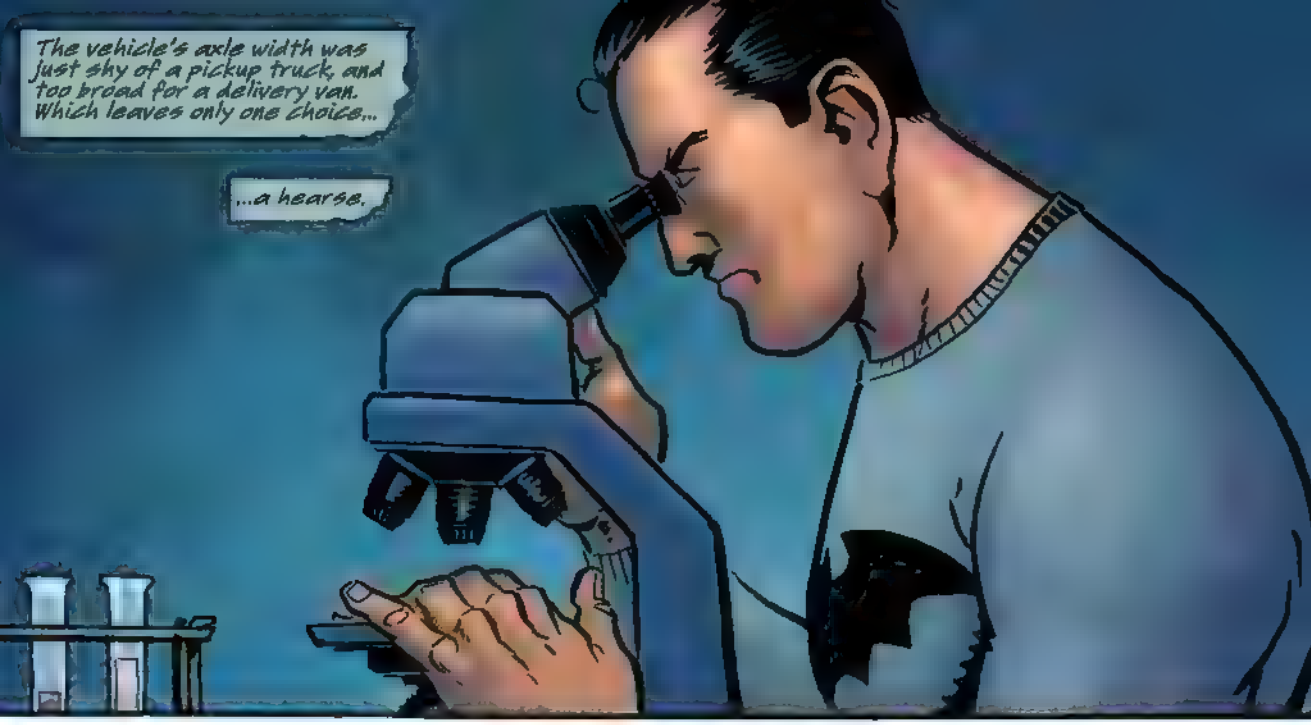
WELL, *um*... YEAH. THANKS, REYNOLDS.
TAKE ALL THE TIME YOU NEED, SIR.
LET'S GO, YOU GUYS! CAPTAIN WANTS US TO FEND OFF ANY RUBBER-NECKERS.

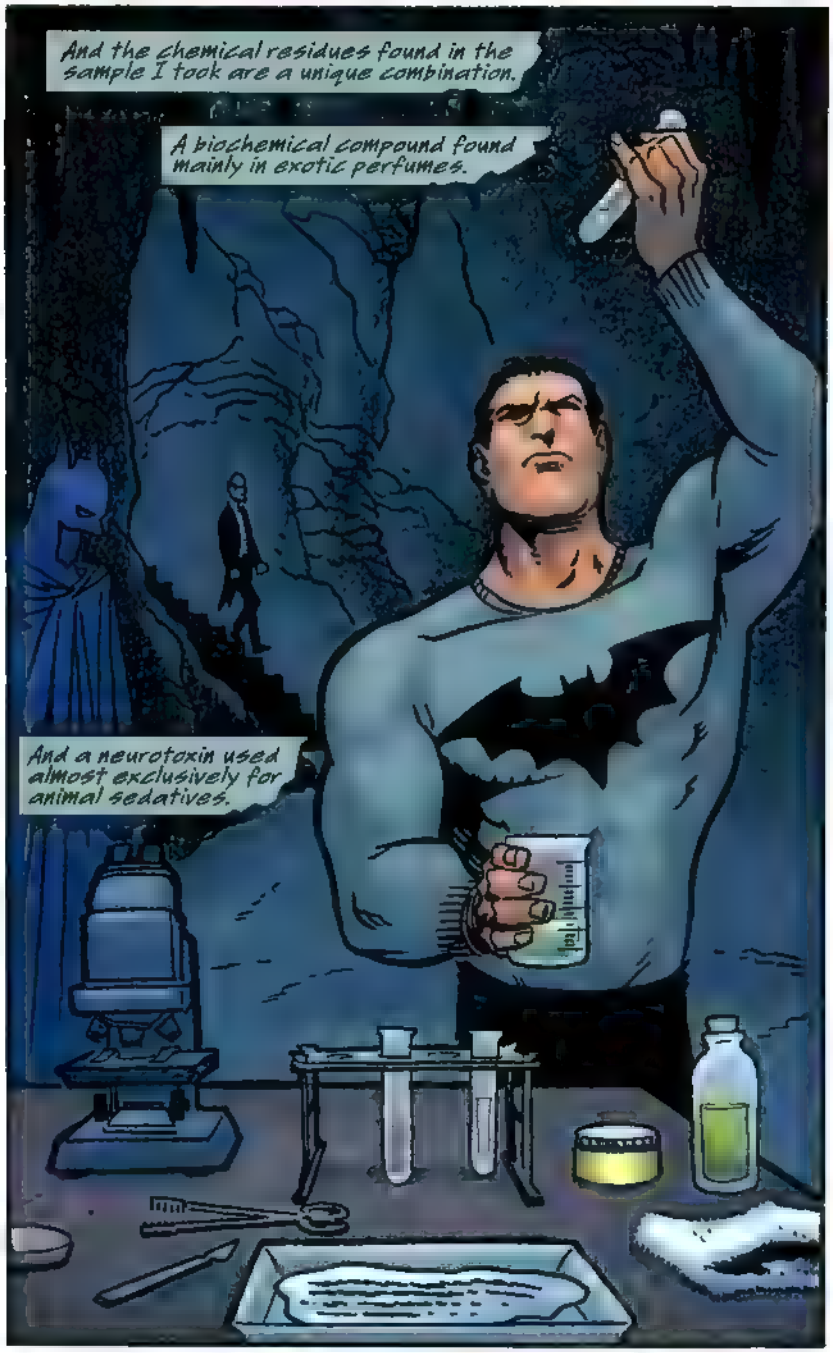

Suddenly, out of nowhere...
The slap of his boots and the dark beat of that big, black cape.
I try to stay cool as I hate to realize...
...sometimes... he even scares ME just a bit.
I GUESS THIS LEAVES NO DOUBT. IT IS A SERIAL KILLER AT WORK...
YEAH. AND I'M SICK OF IT!
NO OFFENSE, BUT I DON'T LIKE THE FACT THAT THIS IS BECOMING A HABIT--YOU AND I STARING DOWN AT THE HELPLESS VICTIM OF SOME DAMN LUNATIC!
WHAT THE HELL--?!
WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING TO THIS CITY?
I WISH I KNEW, JIM.
I WISH I KNEW...

KITCHEN WORKER FOUND HER A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO--INSIDE THAT DUMPSTER.
TSHHH
SHE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE OTHERS. NECK'S A MESS.
NO BLOOD
HER WRISTS AND ANKLES WERE BOUND. AND THE LEVEL OF BRUISING WOULD INDICATE THAT SHE STRUGGLED A LOT.
HER HEELS AND KNUCKLES ARE BADLY SCRAPED, SHE MUST HAVE BEEN TIED DOWN ON A HARD, ROUGH SURFACE.
THE FORMER VICTIMS HAD THAT AS WELL...
WERE THE OTHERS SEXUALLY ASSAULTED?
NOT THAT WE CAN TELL. PARTIALLY UNDRESSED, LIKE THIS ONE BUT, LIKE I SAID, NO *DNA* EVIDENCE OF *ANY* KIND.
THE REPETITIVE NATURE OF THESE CRIMES... IT'S ALMOST *RITUALISTIC.*

THE TRASH BINS ARE NEARLY FULL, AND THIS ALLEY DOESN'T APPEAR TO GET MUCH TRAFFIC.
THESE TIRE TREADS ARE TOO SMALL FOR A GARBAGE TRUCK. STILL, FAIRLY *WIDE SET* FOR AN ORDINARY CAR.
YOU'RE RIGHT. AND FAIRLY FRESH...
SSSSST
I'LL BE IN TOUCH. THIS *HAS* TO END!
GOOD LUCK.
NICCOLAI?
WHEN CAN I BE THE ONE TO HARVEST THE BLOOD FOR OUR NEEDS?

ALL IN GOOD TIME, DEAR DALA.
FOR NOW, IT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPRESENT OUR INTERESTS *OUTSIDE* THE WALLS OF THIS KEEP.
HIS VOICE IS DARK AND RICH, EMANATING FROM A THROAT LONG LATHERED BY WARM BLOOD.
HIS PRESENCE COMMANDS THE ATTENTION OF ANY ROOM HE SURVEYS.
BUT... I AM SO VERY ANXIOUS TO BE ONE WITH YOU-- TO BE *AS* YOU.
AND THERE ARE *OTHERS* IN THE BROTHERHOOD WHO GROW IMPATIENT FOR ETERNITY'S GIFT.
SOME OF OUR BRETHREN ARE EVEN FRIGHTENED OF HIM
PATIENCE IS A NECESSITY, MY DEAR. HOW ELSE CAN ONE ENDURE THE EONS' RHYTHM AND FLUX?
WE MUST WEED OUT THOSE WHO CANNOT BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THE AGES. ONLY *THEY* WHO ENDURE SHALL DESERVE *NOCTURNA'S* KISS.
BUT NOW, COME, WE MUST REST.
I CAN FEEL THE CURSED DAWN DRAWING NEAR.


The vehicle's axle width was just shy of a pickup truck, and too broad for a delivery van. Which leaves only one choice...
...a hearse.

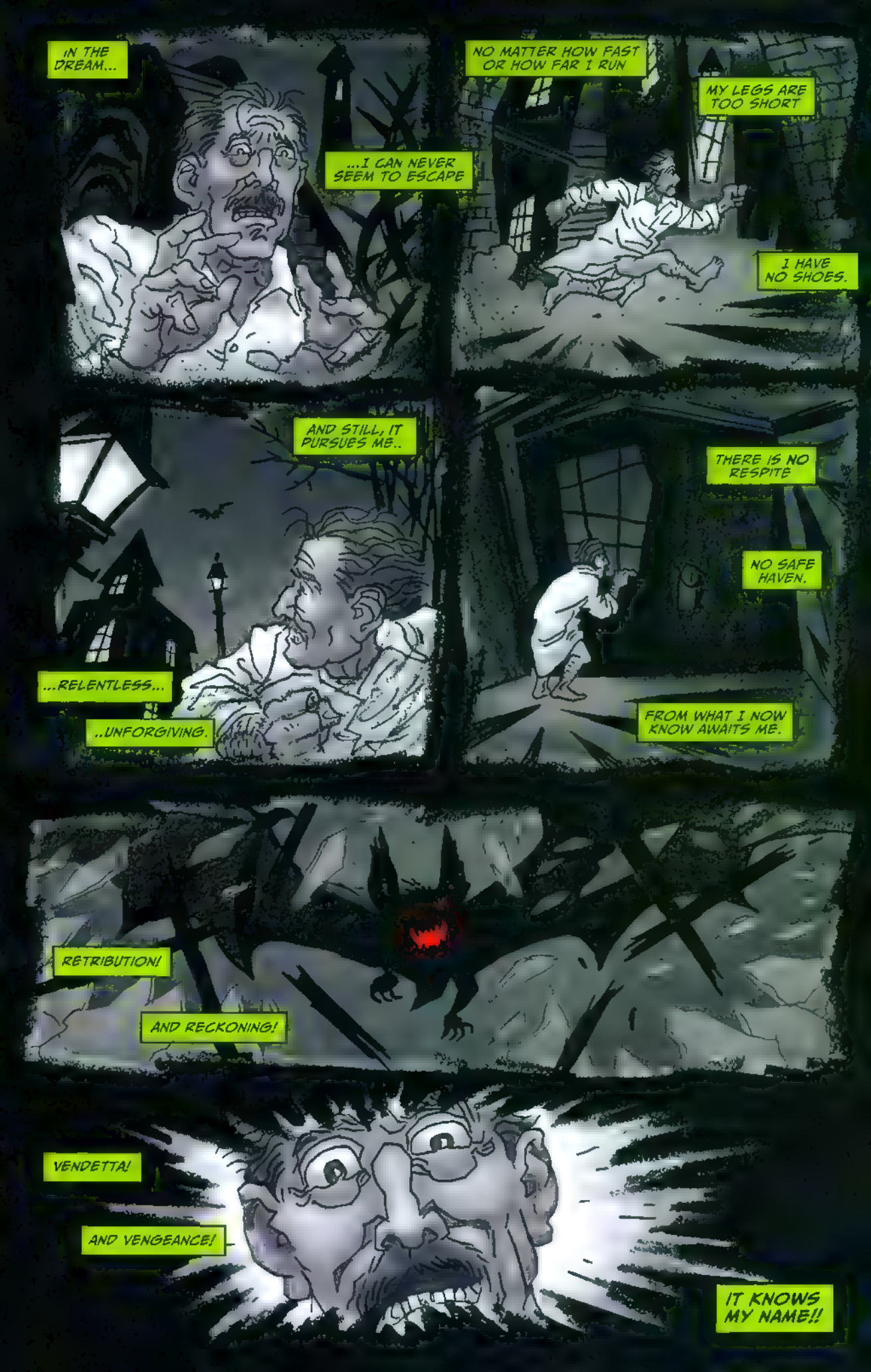

And the chemical residues found in the sample I took are a unique combination.
A biochemical compound found mainly in exotic perfumes.
And a neurotoxin used almost exclusively for animal sedatives.

SIR, I DO HATE TO INTERRUPT YOU FROM PLAYING WITH YOUR CHEMISTRY SET...
...BUT I NEED TO REMIND YOU OF A WAYNE FOUNDATION MEETING THIS COMING AFTERNOON.

THANKS, ALFRED. I DO WANT TO ONLY APPEAR TO SLEEP THROUGH THAT SESSION.

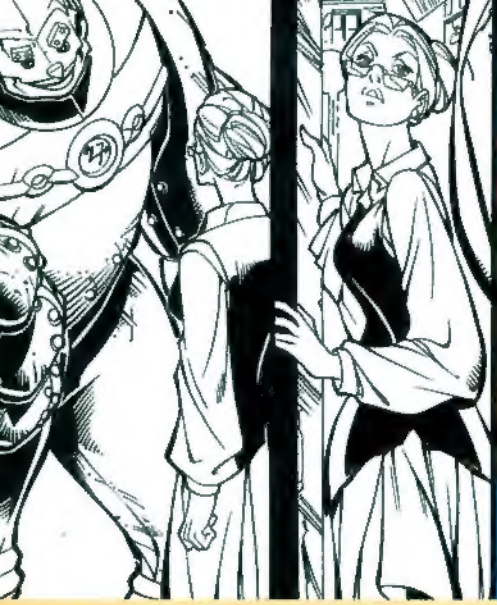
AND... yawwnn... TO DO THAT, I AM GOING TO NEED TO GRAB A FEW WINKS BEFOREHAND.
AND, CONVENIENTLY, IT IS JUST YOUR BEDTIME, SIR. DAYBREAK IS NIGH.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.
I JUST SPENT THE WHOLE NIGHT SPYING ON MY BOYFRIEND'S HOUSE.
2301
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME?
I NEVER USED TO BE LIKE THIS!
KLK KLK KLK
OH, NO...!
DADDY'S LOOSENED ALL THE LIGHT BULBS AGAIN.
AND WHY'S HE GOT THE COUCH ALL TURNED AROUND LIKE THIS--OH.
THIS IS SO VERY UNLIKE HIM. HE SEEMS AFRAID OF HIS OWN SHADOW THESE DAYS.
OR SOMEBODY ELSE'S...
MAYBE IT'S AFFECTING ME, AS WELL. MAYBE...
IN ANY EVENT, I'VE GOT TO GET TO BED.
THE SUN'S COMING UP.
SLEEP WELL, DADDY.
N-N-NUB-BIB? FEH?


IN THE DREAM...
...I CAN NEVER SEEM TO ESCAPE
NO MATTER HOW FAST OR HOW FAR I RUN
MY LEGS ARE TOO SHORT
I HAVE NO SHOES.
AND STILL, IT PURSUES ME..
...RELENTLESS...
..UNFORGIVING.
THERE IS NO RESPITE
NO SAFE HAVEN.
FROM WHAT I NOW KNOW AWAITS ME.
RETRIBUTION!
AND RECKONING!
VENDETTA!
AND VENGEANCE!
IT KNOWS MY NAME!!

Rallstone, Inc., one of Gotham's oldest industries, was originally a livestock purveyor.
Over the years, the company diversified into a variety of ventures, all derived from their initial stock. Including cosmetics.
Failure ensued, and their factories were sold off.
All but one which remains, broken and vacant.
LONELY NIGHT, BROS.
YOU THROWIN' DOWN?
YEAH, YOU GOT THE CLAIM.
WASSUP?
DALA SENT US.
SAYS SHE MIGHT NEED IT TONIGHT, AND WE SHOULD STAND READY.
YEAH, YEAH... WE READY. WE READY.
CHK
KREEEEEK
"READY" AIN'T THE QUALITY THAT'S IN SHORT SUPPLY.
THAT'D BE "FOLLOW THROUGH."
ASK ME...
SHHAAK

'CHU MEAN?
I'M JUST SAYIN'... HOW LONG WE BEEN DOIN' THIS BROTHERHOOD BIT? THREE... FOUR MONTHS NOW?
AND I'M STILL ONE SPIN OLDER EVERY DAMN DAY!
NOW, I AIN'T SQUEAMISH. AIN'T LOSIN' MY NERVE. AND, YEAH, IT'S A HELLUVA BUZZ--HEARIN' 'EM SCREAM AN' ALL THE REST. I'M EVEN GETTIN' USED TO THE TASTE!
BUT THAT MONK... HE SURE IS FULL OF PROMISES.
AN' I'M JUST GETTIN' TIRED A' WAITIN'!
I HEAR YA, MAN. I HEAR YA.
TO BE CONTINUED



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FOR SPECIAL NEWS, DOWNLOADS, SURPRISES!
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Now where were we? That's right, we were in the middle of visiting with Editorial when we were interrupted by lack of column space. Well, since this is a new week and I have 400 new words to play with, let's continue…

We left off with **Joey Cavalieri** and should go next door to Senior Editor **Peter Tomasi**, but before we do, we'll pop across the hall to get our daily fix of candy treats from the shared office of Associate Editor **Tom Palmer Jr.** and Assistant Editor **Jeanine Schaefer**. Both are a little too busy to chat; Tom is putting the finishing touches on the new **TERRA** (so *that's* how she's related to the other Terras), and Jeanine is processing pages for the next SUPERMAN/ BATMAN, arc (I was wondering where the new Metal Men would appear next). I'll just grab some Snickers and be on my way.

Back to Peter. Guess he took becoming the editor of Batman to heart: he now keeps his overhead lights off and door half cracked. Very Batcave-like. Still, I dare to venture inside to see what he's working on. Surprised to find it wasn't Batman or Green Lantern, but the latest **James Robinson** hardcover that sheds light on a very particular year from the early days of the DC Universe. Can't wait to see what he has in store.

Next up, Editor **Joan Hilty**. Now, Joan is probably the most schizophrenic of our editors (and I mean that in the nicest way possible). Not only does Joan edit both DC Universe and Johnny DC titles, but she is also working on a special project for our upstairs cousins in Vertigo. Seems a bit confusing, but as long as Bugs and Tweety don't become members of the Suicide Squad, no one seems to mind. And speaking of Suicide Squad, Joan is finishing an issue of CHECKMATE where they appear to live up to their name. Looks like we have a new widow in the DCU.

Since Joan just waved me out of her office, and her neighbor **Steve Wacker** has his door closed, let me cross the hall again and check in with Assistant Editors **Harvey Richards** and **Rachel Gluckstern**. Harvey is one of the main men behind the scenes of our groundbreaking project **52** and is marking off the days until **52** wraps. Looks like issue 52 comes out on May 2, 2007 (hmm, issue 52 on 5/2~ talk about serendipity). And while Harvey supports Steve Wacker (more on him next week) on **52**, Rachel has Joan's back on all the Johnny DC titles and DCU titles she edits. Guess Rachel's only 2/3 schizophrenic.

Would have loved to hit the rest of the offices this week, but we are out of space again. Stick with me next week when we wrap this up.

To be continued.

dan didio

DC NATION

For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at dccomics.com

Next in...

BATMAN: THE MAD MONK #3

The Mad Monk's terror begins to boil over and spill into the streets of Gotham!

THE HOT LIST THIS WEEK

BATMAN #657

BATMAN AND THE MAD MONK #2

52 #21

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TEAM OCDCP